TWO LINE TEASER

AMUSEMENT TODAY™

www.amusementtoday.com

JULY 2013 BONUS SECTION B

$25 million investment on 15 acres by Arie family

Orlando's Fun Spot America opens to record numbers

STORY: *Scott Rutherford*
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — A refreshing 'David' vs. 'Goliath' powerplay was initiated in central Florida this spring when Fun Spot America on International Drive unveiled its $25 million expansion that offers area visitors — and local residents — an affordable alternative to the giant theme parks orbiting the city.

The new $15 million Fun Spot America has a collection of thrill rides including, clockwise from top left: Freedom Flyer (Chance/ Vekoma); White Lightning (Great Coasters); Tilt-A-Whirl (Larson); Rip Curl (Wisdom) and in the foreground the Double Decker Carousel (Chance) and the 250 foot tall Skycoaster (Skycoaster/Ride Entertainment).
AT/GARY SLADE

In celebration of Fun Spot's 15th anniversary, a Grand Re-Opening was held on Saturday, June 8, 2013. Florida Congressman Daniel Webster, local officials and other local celebrities gathered for the ribbon cutting that included free entertainment, food and prize offerings.

Underway since September 2012, the expansion enlarges the park from five to 15 acres and features two family roller coasters, a SkyCoaster, three new thrill rides, a new 45-foot-tall, multi-level go-cart track along with a new food court, new ticket booth, additional parking and rest rooms. Fun Spot hired 100 new employees for this expansion, and more than 150 people were hired by the local general contractor, H.J. High Construction of Winter Park, Fla. for the construction of the new park.

Fun Spot's Evolution

When asked about the genesis of the current Fun Spot expansion, John Arie, Sr., Fun Spot's owner and CEO, explains what led him and his family to develop this property. "When we bought the property two and half years ago, we really didn't have a master plan on how to expand. We had to make the decision on whether we were going to go with a bowling alley, an FEC, a theme park or a waterpark. We looked around, talked with a lot of people in IAAPA and ultimately decided to stay with the small park atmosphere ... like Knoebels. We traveled around the country talking to hundreds of people at about 30 different parks. It was a process, a collaboration with people who were knowledgeable and educated in the industry. We took a lot of what we learned and put it into what we've got here."

Aire also made sure to mention that attending *AT's* Golden Ticket Awards Ceremonies has provided him with a more personal fact-finding experience. "The IAAPA show was one of the resources we had but the beauty of the Golden Tickets was a smaller presentation that offers a much more intimate involvement with the people there. We went to several parks over the last three or four years during the Golden Tickets" said Arie. "It was invaluable to do this and talk to the people running these places. I'm really looking forward to the Golden Tickets event at Santa Cruz this year. We've gone to Dollywood, and Holiday World was an eye-opening experience. It was all

▸ See AMERICA, page 2B

▸AMERICA

Continued from page 1B

valuable, the time we spent at those parks."

Coasters are big draw

When Fun Spot embarked on its recent expansion, officials made a wise decision to make sure roller coasters were a major part of the plan. "When I started Fun 'n Wheels on I-Drive in 1978, I never expected I would be having a 15 acre park with roller coasters just up the street," said Arie. "But I knew that roller coasters would take our parks to a new level."

And they certainly have. Opened this past June are two family-friendly roller coasters: White Lightning, an amazing new wooden coaster designed and built by Pennsylvania-based Great Coasters International, Inc. (see story on page 10B), and Freedom Flyer, a family suspended coaster.

The $5 million Freedom Flyer is the result of a partnership between Chance Rides and Vekoma Rides International. The majority of the coaster, mainly the supports, track and controls, were all produced in the U.S. by Chance Rides at that manufacturer's facilities in Wichita, Kansas. The ride's sleek and comfortable train came from Vekoma.

Sporting an eye-catching blue-and-yellow color scheme, Freedom Flyer was intentionally placed over the midway so that even spectators are offered a thrill as riders soar through the coaster's sinuous twists and turns just above their heads.

After climbing a lift hill that tops out at 65 feet, Freedom Flyer's 10-car train begins its graceful flight, gliding along the 1,296-foot-long course at 34 mph. The single train, which utilizes Vekoma's comfortable new restraint system, accommodates 20 riders per circuit.

The Fun Spot America expansion represents a $25 million investment in the Orlando park that is now home to two family roller coasters, the second tallest Skycoaster ever built and a mix of other family rides.
COURTESY FUN SPOT AMERICA

On hand for the festivities was Charlotte, Vekoma account manager, sales & marketing. "Hats off for the expansion and opening festivities at Fun Spot!" said Van Etten. "The Freedom Flyer coaster is the fifth in a row of this new design suspended family coaster, following earlier successful installations in Moviepark Germany; Frontier City, Oklahoma City; Grönalund Sweden; Farup in Denmark and now Fun Spot. Parks are delighted having this coaster in their park and guests just love it. Fun Spot is a real family business and they have translated this family feeling very well into their park."

Angus Jenkins, North American sales for Chance Rides extols the suspended coaster's appeal: "Freedom Flyer is aptly named as anyone who has met John Arie would agree ... he is one of the most patriotic people they have ever met. In fact, he mounted a Statue of Liberty on top of the new and only double decker Americana Carousel manufactured to date as soon as installation was complete.

"Fun Spot's new Freedom Flyer is a perfect fit for the entire family. A suspended family coaster that offers the rush of a much larger coaster, while allowing small children and the more cautious adults to enjoy. The hanging seats create a smooth ride while creating the illusion that you truly are flying. This is the first coaster experience for most of the younger children due to reduced height requirements. Now parents don't have to split up the four and five-year-olds; everyone can ride! The perfect match for Fun Spot's client demographic. The Freedom Flyer was made in the U.S.A. by Chance Rides under license of Vekoma," said Jenkins.

Regarding the new coasters,

▸ See AMERICA, page 4B

The Schwarzkopf Enterprise, above, was brought to the park from Six Flags Over Georgia and outfitted with a impressive LED light package from Denny's Electronics. IRM brokered the ride deal. Rides 4U located this Miler Sea Seapent from Playland's Castaway Cove.
AT/GARY SLADE

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR OPENING!
FUN SPOT AMERICA
All the best on your inaugural season!
Proudly suppling Fun Spot America with a USA-made Miler coaster!
MANY MAJOR MANUFACTURERS
Available Under One Roof!
SBF
VISA
S&S–SANSEI TECHNOLOGIES INC
KMG
RIDES 4U
221 EVANS WAY, SUITE E • SOMERVILLE, NJ 08876
PHONE: (908) 526-8009 • FAX: (908) 526-4535 • WWW.RIDES4U.COM
RIDES 4U

AMUSEMENT TODAY

Amusement Today is an independent newspaper, published monthly by Amusement Today Inc., P.O. Box 5427, Arlington, Texas 76005-5427. To order extra copies of this Bonus Section call (817) 460-7220. The entire contents of this Bonus Section are copyrighted 2013 by Amusement Today, Inc.

Amusement Today would like to thank John Arie, Sr., and the entire staff at Fun Spot America for their help with information used in this section.

Bonus Section Staff:
Gary Slade, Scott Rutherford, Stacey Childress, Sue Nichols, Dean Lamanna, Terry Lind, Sammy Piccola

Fire Ball

LARSON INTERNATIONAL INC.

PO BOX 638 · Plainview, Texas 79072

(806) 293-1353 · www.larsonintl.com

Super Shot

Flying Scooters™

Tilt-A-Whirl™

FAST FACTS

Name/Park
Freedom Flyer/
Fun Spot America
Orlando, Fla.

Type
Family Suspended Coaster
(Tallest of it's kind in the U.S.)

Height/Length
65 feet/1,296 feet

Drop/ Speed/ Maximum Banking
39 feet/34 mph/
55 degrees

Height Restriction
36 inches with a
48 inch tall rider

Train
One, 10-car train seating
20 riders, supplied by Vekoma Rides
International

Safety Controls
Chance Rides Mfg.

Supplier
Chance Rides Inc. (Wichita, Kan.)
under license with Vekoma Rides
International
(Vlodrop, AB, Netherlands)

Cost
$5. million

—Source: Fun Spot America/ Chance Rides/Vekoma

AMERICA

Continued from page 2B

perhaps John Arie Jr., Fun Spot's television spokesman and COO, said it best of all: "These are two great coasters, both built in America. You get great airtime with the wooden coaster, and it's so smooth. The steel coaster leaves your feet dangling and you soar over people's heads as they walk through the park. It's cool."

Skycoaster, other rides offer diverse thrills

While the two roller coasters are obvious attention-grabbers so are the other new attractions, which are aimed squarely at thrill seeking families.

First up is the 250-foot-tall Skycoaster (world's second tallest), which towers above everything at Fun Spot. Supplied by Skycoaster, Inc. and Ride Entertainment Group, this particular unit first thrilled riders in Las Vegas at MGM Grand Adventures (1996-2001) before being refurbished and upgraded.

"We kept the original green lighting that was used at MGM but we had to strengthen the arch before it could operate in Florida," explained John Arie. "Because the wind load rating has changed in the last ten years, we totally reinforced the first 200 feet of lattice structure; we actually doubled its strength to what it was in Las Vegas. It can now withstand winds up to 140 mph."

Just as with the Skycoaster, it was important for John Arie and his family to choose America-made products for the majority of their ride package. "Coming out of the recession, we felt it was our obligation to buy American as opposed to overseas. When choosing our rides we tried to keep every thing as American as possible. We wanted bright, flashy rides that people could enjoy. We already had a Paratrooper and a Scrambler. Last year we bought [from Chance] the world's only Americana-themed double carousel.

"We wanted proven, middle-of-the road rides with good capacity and reasonable costs. That guided our decisions on which rides to buy," said Arie.

Also new this season at Fun Spot is the first new Tilt-A-Whirl produced by Larson International since acquiring the exclusive manufacturing rights from Sellner Manufacturing. The attractive eight-car unit features the new low-slung carriages and brilliant illumination.

Larson's Jeff Novotny comments on the new Tilt: "It was great working with the Fun Spot team again to produce the first Tilt-A-Whirl with all LED lighting. Fun Spot chose vibrant colors and designed spectacular graphics."

The other rides brought to Fun Spot as part of the expansion include a new Rip Curl from Colorado-based Wisdom Rides. This custom-designed Himalaya-style ride features a surfer theme and is housed in its own permanent enclosure. An impressive sound system and lighting package make this ride popular with teenagers.

In a deal brokered by IRM, a Schwarzkopf/Intamin Enterprise was purchased, relocated from Six Flags Over Georgia and refurbished before finding a new home at Fun Spot. While formerly known as the Wheelie in Georgia the ride retains its original name of Enterprise at its new home.

For the younger set, Fun Spot worked with Rides 4U to acquire the Sea Serpent, a Miler kiddie coaster that was relocated from Playland's Castaway Cove in Ocean City, N.J. The joins Fun Spot's arsenal of rides geared for the park's smaller guests.

Lighting up the rides was important since the cooler night hours can often bring some of the larger crowds out for an evening at Fun Spot. "We bought LEDs from a number of vendors," said Arie. "Wisdom has their own LEDs. The Tilt-A-Whirl from Larson and our refurbished Schwarzkopf Enterprise our both outfitted with LEDs from Denny's Electronics. They are all absolutely beautiful at night."

Arie and his team worked closely with a number of vendors and key suppliers to bring the Fun Spot project to fruition. Chief among these are: Midway Games, a joint venture with Bob's Space Racers; American Specialty (insurance provider); ColorVision (ride photo provider); Core Cashless (point of sale provider); Irvine Ondrey Engineering (wood coaster safety system); Denny's Electronics (LED light systems) and Gold Medal Products (concession equipment).

Once all is said and done, what John Aire and his dedicated family have created at Fun Spot is something quite extraordinary. This is especially significant considering the park's location within one of the most competitive amusement industry environments in the world. "We provide people with a great alternative, both the tourists and the locals," said Arie. "You can come for a ride, or a couple of hours or all day. People are looking for those options, and for value."

CONGRATULATIONS TO **FUN SPOT AMERICA ORLANDO**
WITH THE **SUCCESSFUL OPENING** ON JUNE 8, 2013

VEKOMA™
RIDES MANUFACTURING BV

SCHAAPWEG 18 6063 BA VLODROP THE NETHERLANDS TEL +31 (0)475 409222 FAX +31 (0)475 402115 **WWW.VEKOMA.COM**

Chance Rides is Having Huge Fun at Fun Spot America

Freedom Flyer
Suspended Family Coaster

36’ Double Decker Carrousel

Supplied under license from Vekoma Rides Manufacturing BV

FUN SPOT AMERICA

CHANCE RIDES®

Chance Rides congratulates Fun Spot America on their huge expansion, featuring the first Americana themed 36’ Double Decker Carrousel and the Freedom Flyer Suspended Family Coaster, which is the longest in America.

SALES@CHANCERIDES.COM • 316.945.6555 • CHANCERIDES.COM

Filling Central Florida's need for mid-range amusements

Fun Spot Attractions is a happy medium for owner John Arie, Sr.

STORY: *Dean Lamanna*
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO, Fla. — John Arie, Sr., is enjoying the ride of his life.

Arie's Central Florida company, Fun Spot Attractions, with free-admission parks in Orlando and Kissimmee, has found a profitable niche between the mega-theme park and the family entertainment center (FEC) in the region's saturated amusement market. Even while the economy has seen more rises and dips than a SkyCoaster — an attraction that has helped put Arie's properties on the map — Fun Spot has enjoyed growth every year for more than decade.

This season, Arie's now-25-acre Orlando park, Fun Spot America, is showcasing its $25 million expansion along International Drive. The array of new rides officially introduced on June 8, the park's 15th birthday, included the 2,000-foot-long White Lightning, Orlando's first wooden coaster, and Freedom Flyer, a 1,200-foot-long steel suspended coaster. Along with the property's current name — it was formerly known as Fun Spot Action Park — new parking and infrastructure are part of the package. (A waterpark is being eyed for a recently purchased, vacant 10-acre parcel that is part of the park's total acreage.)

For Arie, 64, a Rocky Mountain, N.C., native who moved to Central Florida in his teens and first entered the industry as a $40-a-week go-kart track employee in 1968, Fun Spot is very much a family affair: son John is the company's chief operating officer (and energetic TV pitchman), while son Mark is in construction and helped build the park. Other members of the immediate and extended Arie family work in every department from human resources to arcade management.

John Arie, Sr., president/owner of Fun Spot Attractions amusement parks in Orlando and Kissimmee, has just completed a $25 million expansion of his Orlando operation, Fun Spot America. He oversees more than 300 employees, who include many Arie family members.
AT/GARY SLADE

An avid flying enthusiast who also enjoys boating and fishing, Arie got the amusement spark when he first boarded the Paratrooper ride at the Central Florida Fair in the mid-1960s. "The sights, the smells — that experience burned pleasure into my mind," he said. His main pleasure these days is creating those memories in his guests, and he shared his thoughts on doing just that with *AT*.

What was the impetus for tripling the size of your Orlando property?

The opening our eight-acre park down in Kissimmee, near Universal Studios Florida, which was a phenomenal business move. It gave us the knowledge and helped create the vision that we could do a lot more in Orlando with more than the five acres with which we originally started there.

At first, we didn't know whether we should go more to the FEC — with a bowling alley and nighttime entertainment that seems to be prevalent everywhere — or expand our amusement park. We chose the latter.

How did you decide on your new attractions?

I spent 2011, the year after our purchase of the additional acreage, traveling the country in my own airplane — I have a Cessna 400 Corvalis 400 — to 30 or so amusement parks and riding about 50 roller coasters. I talked to hundreds of personnel and key people throughout the parks about the positives and negatives.

I came to the realization that, even with all these gigantic, multi-multi-million-dollar coasters, it still seemed like middle-of-the-road "family" attractions were the top money-grossers. Therefore, we chose what we felt were two unique coasters — the wooden out-and-back White Lightning, from Great Coasters International, and the steel suspended Freedom Fighter by Vekoma — to be the headliners within our park.

We also found an used, 250-foot SkyCoaster in Las Vegas that was at the MGM Grand Adventures for about 10 years before being taken down and put in storage for another seven or eight. It's become our centerpiece visual icon and has really changed the landscape of International Drive.

From a marketing standpoint, who are you targeting?

We already enjoy about 60 percent of our attendance from locals; we're very strong there.

We'd like to attract the teens and tweens, yet still keep the families. Family units, school groups — basically, anybody who comes to

▸ See ARIE, page 7B

FAST FACTS

A quick look at John Arie's park career and history:

- **1969-1975:** operated ***Lil' 500 Mini Bike Track*** in Maitland, Fla.
- **1975-1976:** operated **Karts A Go Go** in Ocean City, Md.
- **1976-1981:** operated **Little Wheels Go-Karts** in Orlando, Fla., a single track with a unique "tummy tingler" hill
- **1979-1988:** operated **Fun 'N Wheels** amusement park operations in Orlando and Kissimmee, Fla., featuring the world's first themed action parks with multiple tracks and rides
- **1990-1998:** operated **Fun Spot Amusement Parks** in Myrtle Beach, S.C. and Virginia Beach, Va.
- **1996-Present:** developed and operates **Fun Spot Action Park** present location in Orlando, Fla. just off International Drive, featuring multi-level tracks as its major attraction components plus 13 additional rides
- 2004-Present: operates **SkyCoaster of Florida**, LLC dba **Fun Spot USA** in Kissimmee, site of world's tallest Skycoaster at 300 feet
- 2007: **John Arie, Jr.** (John's son) named COO of **Fun Spot Attractions**
- **2013:** $25 million Orlando location expansion completed in six month, on time and on budget, park renamed **Fun Spot America**, site of world's second tallest Skycoaster at 250 feet

—Source: Fun Spot America

CORE cashless
Would like to extend a
HUGE
Congratulations!
FUN SPOT AMERICA
FunSpot America has just completed an amazing expansion, adding roller coasters, attractions and bringing more fun to the park than ever! These guys just do things right. Go see what all the buzz is about!
To find out more about the cashless system at FunSpot, contact CORE Cashless today at COREcashless.com or find us on Facebook and Twitter.

ARIE
Continued from page 6B

Central Florida for the major attractions.

Tourists in this region typically are here for a five-day vacation, with two additional traveling days. We want to get them to give up one of those five days to come visit us.

How are you accomplishing that?

With a business plan that has worked very well for 15 years — and that is, offering an inexpensive day out. We have free admission and parking. Mom and Dad don't have to pay when they come in; only participants will be paying to participate.

Consistently, we've heard it said: "My kids enjoy coming here more than Disney or SeaWorld or Universal." And that's because in reality, they're doing more at Fun Spot America. At the high-dollar parks, you wind up going on two, three, four rides, and if you really want to ride more than that, then you have to pay for special treatment so that you can go to the front of the line. (laughs) We're the opposite of that.

This AT archive photo of John Arie's Fun 'N Wheels I-Drive location in Orlando shows his drive to seek out the hottest in family rides being offered. Here is one of the first models of the Riptide, a wet/dry waterslide from Bill Crandall's New Wave Rides. the wet/dry waterslide concept would explode on the scene in the 1980's.
AT FILE

Our customers also like interactive rides, like bumper boasts and go-karts, which offer a different ride experience each time.

You're known for your fun, down-home TV spots featuring Arie family members. How has this casual promotional approach worked for you amid all the pricey corporate amusement advertising in Orlando?

We're locally owned and operated and aren't interested in doing slick television commercials. We're a value product and we communicate that in our ads, and we have a laugh at ourselves in the process.

No matter what people may think of the ads, they always seem to remember them. Our marketing director, Mark Brisson, has done a great job for us.

What was the total attendance at your properties last year?

Since we have free admission and free parking, it's really hard to get an accurate count. But we do sporadic attendance surveys and estimate that we get more than a half a million people a year in Orlando and more than 700,000 in Kissimmee. We anticipate that total rising to over two million next year.

How did your operations hold up through the recession?

Very well. We never saw a decrease; in fact, 2012 was the highest-gross, highest-at-profit year we ever experienced. We're very pleased and feel tremendously blessed.

Did you encounter any zoning issues with the Fun Spot America expansion?

Zoning was not a problem. However, the bureaucratic hurdles were unbelievable. We had to redesign the entire project because of an easement. And after we paid $300,000 for all our building permits and started working, another inspector came by and stopped us because we didn't have a $50 tree-removal permit. That kind of thing just goes on and on, and it's frustrating.

Has the expansion impacted ticket prices?

Yes. We have two unlimited-ride pricing levels, adult and child. They're both gone up five dollars — from $35 to $40 for the adult, and $25 to $30 for the child. Individual ride prices have not gone up.

What kinds of rides appeal to you personally?

It's too simple to say the ones that make money for us, isn't it? (laughs) I cut my teeth in go-kart operations, so a good go-kart track would be my first choice. Number two would be roller coasters. Number three would be classic amusement rides, like the Himalaya and the Paratrooper. I remember as a kid going to the fair and riding the Paratrooper, and thinking it was the best experience in the world — never knowing or envisioning that I would someday own two Paratrooper rides.

What do you find most satisfying about working in this industry?

It's fun, challenging and innovative. It's kind of like the last American cowboy industry, where you've got freedom to grow and do things. Seeing people are having fun is a big reward, as is helping our young, entry-level employees grow and mature and understand management and motivation — and how to make a living doing something you like to do.

Most of all, I'm creating something to turn over to my family, and their kids, when I retire and die. I'm very thankful for that.

Congratulations on the addition to your park.
Thank you for including the Wisdom Rides Inc. Rip Curl in your expansion plans.

FUN SPOT Attractions

WISDOM RIDES

Vic, Mai, and Bryan Wisdom and all the Wisdom employees thank you for buying American!

Wisdom Rides Inc. • PO Box 238 Merino , CO 80741 • 970-522-7515
Fax: 970-522-2902 • wisdomrides.com

Above, Irvine Ondrey supplied the computer controlled safety system for Fun Spot America's signature coaster White Lightning. Below, riders enjoy the Eli Bridge Scrambler and the always popular go-karts. AT/GARY SLADE; GO-KARTS COURTESY FSA

Industry suppliers turn out for FunSpot America's opening

Clockwise from top left and listed l to r: Jack Mendez, Bob's Space Racers; Len Soled, Rides 4U and Jerry Aldrich, Amusement Industry Consulting took time for the *AT* camera. The Great Coasters International team of Jeff Pike, Bob Dean and Chris Gray were proud to show off their latest coaster creation. Working together on the Freedom Flyer coaster were Vekoma's Charlotte Van Etton with husband Ton and Chance's Angus Jenkins with wife Tisha. Victor Wisdom was happy to see the popularity of his new Rip Curl. Bill Kitchen, Skycoaster inventor, said a few words about this history of the Fun Spot ride and its relocation from the MGM Grand Adventures. AT/GARY SLADE

More Smiles, Less Downtime!

IOE congratulates Fun Spot America on *White Lightning* and is honored to have been their ride controls provider!

IRVINE ONDREY ENGINEERING

We Control the Thrills!

CONTROL SYSTEMS & CONSULTING FOR THE AMUSEMENT INDUSTRY

NEW INSTALLATIONS ✶ RETROFITS ✶ PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER CONSULTING

Brian Ondrey, P.E. has over 15 years' experience in amusement attraction controls

WHITE LIGHTNING

IRVINEONDREY.COM ✶ BRIAN@IRVINEONDREY.COM ✶ 734.353.0679

THANK YOU FUN SPOT

For Letting Us Be Part of Some HUGE Fun!

WHITE LIGHTNING

White Lightning

Steel Frame, Wood Track, 100% Fun

Great Coasters International, Inc. • 2627 State Rt. 890 • Sunbury, PA 17801

570.286.9330 • www.greatcoasters.com

GREAT COASTERS INTERNATIONAL, INC.

Orlando's first wooden roller coaster strikes at Fun Spot

GCII's showpiece White Lightning designed for all

STORY: *Scott Rutherford*
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — Central Florida is renowned for its theme parks. There's literally no place on earth quite like it. And roller coasters are a major facet of those properties. However, conspicuously missing from that varied mix of thrill rides has been a wooden roller coaster. Fun Spot America remedied that situation on June 8, 2013 with the opening of White Lightning, a truly amazing new wooden coaster designed and built by Pennsylvania-based Great Coasters International, Inc.

This project represented a number of firsts for GCII, chiefly among them is the fact that White Lightning is the company's first coaster to feature a steel support structure. But this is no ordinary steel scaffolding. Just as they do with their intricately-fashioned wooden rides, GCII went to great lengths to ensure these steel supports were not only functional but also pleasing to the eye. All the connections are uniform, which gives the ride an attractive, ordered appearance.

While GCII is renowned for producing convoluted twister designs, White Lightning is their first true out-and-back layout. As usual, though, the course is peppered with plenty of their trademark twists, turns and unexpected elevation changes including a working mid-ride double-up, double-down element. They also incorporated their first true 90-degree banked track section, which takes place atop the far turnaround.

Since the 75-foot-tallWhite Lightning utilizes shorter six-car Millennium Flyer trains (most GCII rides use trains twice that length), the designers actually had to re-adjust their formulas and calculations. The result is a fast-paced ride that has no slow spots from chain release to the brake run. The company worked diligently to make sure this action-packed coaster was exceedingly smooth, an impressive feat considering the swift acrobatics the trains are performing. Also new was foam pad seating from Ralph S. Alberts Co., featuring the fun Spot logo stamped into the seat back.

As this was the company's first steel-structured project, they were determined to make sure it *felt* like one of their all-wooden coasters. GCII's Jeff Pike explained to *AT* what that process entailed. "We fully understand how a wooden track works on the ledger system that we use. What we didn't know was how wooden track and ledgers react to being bolted directly to a steel support. It was too big of a question to leave unanswered," said Pike. "When we were working with GCII co-founder Mike Boodley, he said that if we ever got into steel [structured rides], to make sure we kept the ledger connections away from the steel to make it continue to feel like a wooden coaster. And that's what we did. We basically built a three-foot-tall wooden coaster on top of all that steel. And it worked. White Lightning feels the way we expected it to. It doesn't feel ridiculously harsh like some steel-supported coasters can. If you watch the connections and the distributional loads, it behaves the same way our other rides do.

"We didn't want to do it like others have," added Pike. "We didn't want to just slap a ledger against a piece of steel, insert the bolts and call it 'done.' That's easier and cost-effective but it's not our way. Though White Lightning is our first steel-structured ride, it is so far exactly what we expected. We're proud of what we've built and Fun Spot guests seem to really like it. And at the end of the day that's what matters."

AT spoke with Fun Spot owner John Arie, Sr. about his decision to build a wooden coaster and why he chose GCII. "Why a wooden coaster? That's easy," Arie said with a knowing grin." Nobody in Orlando has one. And GCII was chosen for three reasons: they have impeccable credentials in the industry; they're an American company; and they have a proven train that I just couldn't deny. I was concerned that by not going that way increased our chances for failure. So we chose GCII.

To keep ride running safe and smooth, GCII worked with Irvine Ondrey Engineering to deliver the ride safety system.

"We went with a steel structure mainly because it requires less maintenance. Plus, it's powder-coated white that will stand out brilliantly for years," said Aire. "It's a show piece. Come ride it!"

A showpiece indeed. White Lightning is a rollicking wooden coaster experience that will hopefully pave the way for a wave of coasters short on stature but huge in the thrill department. GCII and Fun Spot America have once more proven that wildly entertaining rides do not have to be gigantic to be fun.

FAST FACTS

Name/Park
White Lightning/
Fun Spot America
Orlando, Fla.

Type
Wooden out-and-back roller coaster built on steel support structure

Height/ Length
75 feet/2,032 feet

Drop/Speed/ Maximum Banking
67.2 feet/45 mph/
90 degrees
(53 degrees on first drop)

Height Restriction
46 inches

Trains
Two, 6-car
Millennium Flyer trains
seating 12 riders each

Safety Controls
Irvine Ondrey Engineering
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Supplier
Great Coasters
International, Inc.
Sunbury, Pa.

Cost
$3.5 million

—Source: Fun Spot America/ Great Coasters International

Top to bottom: Fun Spot America's new White Lightning is themed to the American Railroad; riders exit the 90-degree banked back turn; the double-up and down-down was patterened after Knoebel's famed Phoenix; the out-and-back design is unique for GCII and below, two young thrillseekers enjoy the coaster with hands in the air.
AT/GARY SLADE

COURTESY FUN SPOT AMERICA

FAST FACTS

Park
Fun Spot America
5551 Del Verde Way, Orlando, Florida 32819
(407) 363-3867
www.funspotattractions.com

What/Cost
New 15-acre park (10-acres undeveloped) located behind the Fun Spot Action Park/$25 million expansion

Park Construction Contractor
H. J. High Construction, Orlando, Fla.

Admission/Pricing
Free parking and free admission/
Unlimited Armbands:
$39.95 (54 inches and taller), $29.95 (under 54 inches)
Annual Pass: $119.95
Guests may also buy individual ride tickets, costs vary

New Rides
White Lightning, Great Coasters International
Freedom Flyer, Chance Rides/Vekoma Rides Mfg.
Rip Curl, Wisdom Rides
Tilt-A-Whirl, Larson International

Used Rides
Enterprise, Schwarzkopf/Intamin by IRM
(relocated from Six Flags Over Georgia)
Sea Serpent, Miler Coaster by Rides 4U
(relocated from Playland's Castaway Cove)
Skycoaster, Skycoaster Inc. by Ride Entertainment Group
(relocated from MGM Grand Adventures)

Rides Relocated from Fun Spot Attractions
Fun Slide, Fredericksen
Double Decker Carrousel, Chance Rides
Paratrooper, Hrubetz
Scrambler, Eli Bridge
Scooby Boo, Fredericksen
Commander Go-Kart Track
(track length increased from 850 feet to 1,400 feet)

Other Key Suppliers
Midway Games, joint venture with Bob's Space Racers
Insurance Provider, American Specialty
Shade Structures, Creative Shade Solutions
Graphic Design/Signage, Tuten Graphics
Park Benches, American Recycled Plastic
Security Surveillance, Straight Line Communications
Phone System, Emergent Telecommunications
Lockers, School Outfitters/Hallowell
Ride Photo Provider, ColorVision
Point of Sale System, Core Cashless
Wood Coaster Safety System, Irvine Ondrey Engineering
LED Lights, Denny's Electronics
Concession Equipment, Gold Medal Products
Beverage Provider, Pepsi

—Source: Fun Spot America

Daytona Beach, Florida-based Bob's Space Racers provided four games of skill to the new Fun Spot America. During the park's grand opening, and under a agreement with the park, the Bob's team was on hand to teach and train the games employees to create maximum revenue. Delivered to the park was a Water Race, Ballon Bust and Hot Shot basketball toss. Delivering soon will be a ring the bell type game.
AT/GARY SLADE

Top left, Lenexa, Kansas-based Core Cashless provided Fun Spot America with its front entry ticketing system and ride wristband scanning system giving the park accurate counts of passengers rode on each ride. Top right, the SkyDiver provides fresh food for visitors in air conditioned setting under the 250 foot tall Skycoaster arch. Above left, the Chance/Vekoma Freedom Flyer was built over the walkways for more guest interaction. Above right, Larson's Tilt-A-Whirl, Paratrooper and in far background Chance Double Decker Carousel offer more ride choices for guests.
AT/GARY SLADE

Schwarzkopf Enterprise at Fun Spot America

IRM
Proud supplier of the Schwarzkopf Enterprise
Find us on Facebook at IRM Rides or call (609) 425-1220 to receive a current list of available premium used rides

Bob's Space Racers

Congratulates!

FUN SPOT AMERICA™

BSR the supplier of The Games The World Plays™

WATER GUN FUN™ BALLOON BUST™

More Great Games From BSR!

Stinky Feet™ Group Game

Whopper Water™

Striker Group Game™

427 15th ST. DAYTONA BEACH • FLORIDA • 32117

Phone 1-386-677-0761 Fax 1-386-677-0794

WWW.BOBSSPACERACERS.COM

001 AT 61413 TM AND © BOBS SPACE RACERS, INC. 2013